



Page Proof Instructions and Queries

Journal Title: TVA

Article Number: 742167

Thank you for choosing to publish with us. This is your final opportunity to ensure your article will be accurate at publication. Please review your proof carefully and respond to the queries using the circled tools in the image below, which are available by clicking “Comment” from the right-side menu in Adobe Reader DC.*

Please use **only** the tools circled in the image, as edits via other tools/methods can be lost during file conversion. For comments, questions, or formatting requests, please use . Please do **not** use comment bubbles/sticky notes .



*If you do not see these tools, please ensure you have opened this file with **Adobe Reader DC**, available for free at <https://get.adobe.com/reader> or by going to Help > Check for Updates within other versions of Reader. For more detailed instructions, please see <https://us.sagepub.com/ReaderXProofs>.

No.	Query
	Please confirm that all author information, including names, affiliations, sequence, and contact details, is correct.
	Please review the entire document for typographical errors, mathematical errors, and any other necessary corrections; check headings, tables, and figures.
	Please confirm that the Funding and Conflict of Interest statements are accurate.
	Please confirm you have reviewed this proof to your satisfaction and understand this is your final opportunity for review prior to publication.
AQ: 1	Please provide biography for the author “Mary McColgan.”
AQ: 2	Please provide complete reference details for Authors, 2014 or allow us to delete the citation.
AQ: 3	Please check the hierarchy of head level.
AQ: 4	Is this Gray, Broady, et al. (2014) or Gray, R., Lewis, et al. (2014). Please clarify which reference has been cited in the sentence Gray et al. (2014) described how relationship breakdowns cause. . . .
AQ: 5	The sentence seems to be incomplete “Primary studies undertaken” Please check.

Male IPV Perpetrator's Perspectives on Intervention and Change: A Systematic Synthesis of Qualitative Studies

Brian Taylor¹, Mary McColgan¹, and Tony McGinn¹

Abstract

Objective: To add to our understanding of change processes by analyzing perpetrators' perspectives on intervention. **Method:** Fourteen databases were searched and 27 articles reporting relevant qualitative findings were identified. Analytic coding was applied across the findings and discussion sections of all 27 study reports to form an interpretive account of the data set. Studies were also grouped according to their perceived theoretical standpoints, and a summary of themes in each grouping is presented. **Findings:** Study participants were largely positive about their experiences in intervention; new learning such as conflict interruption techniques and new communication skills were commonly cited benefits. Perpetrators attend perpetrator intervention programs with a range of motivations, ranging from a determination to change who they are, to a determination to avoid a custodial sentence. The most common barriers to change, found in this analysis, were cognitive distortions, emotional dysregulation, gendered social constructions, and self-esteem issues. **Conclusion:** Further qualitative investigation, of rigor, with the intention-to-treat population of intimate partner violence perpetrators involved in perpetrator programs is needed. At this point, we would venture that qualitative research, with perpetrators, underlines the precept that formidable barriers to change exist in this population. The centrality of group work to perpetrator interventions should be reconsidered in light of the complexity of the change task and in light of the heterogeneity of this population.

Keywords

anything related to domestic violence, domestic violence, cultural contexts, assessment, domestic violence, cultural contexts, batterers, domestic violence, intervention/treatment, domestic violence, violent offenders

Responding to the physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, or financial abuse within intimate relationships remains a key challenge for health, social care, and criminal justice professionals. The majority of abuse victims are female and a variety of interventions targeting male perpetrators have been developed. Some perpetrators desist from the use of violence with the help of an intervention program (Kelly & Westmarland, 2015). Some perpetrators do not change, even though they have completed an intervention program (Radatz & Wright, 2015). However, decisions which affect families' futures, in profound ways, are often influenced by perpetrators' engagement with these programs. In statutory social work, perpetrator engagement with an intervention affects child protection decision-making (Robertson, 1999). Abuse victims place hope in treatment programs for their partner and make decisions about staying in relationships based on an abusive partners' engagement in treatment (Austin & Dankwort, 1999). Judges, across the globe, routinely refer perpetrators to treatment as an alternative-to-custodial sentences (Owens, 2011).

As practitioners and abuse survivors put their faith in the efficacy of intervention programs for intimate partner violence (IPV) perpetrators, the impetus to understand IPV perpetrator

change, and how we can encourage the process of change, remains high. The efficacy of these interventions has been studied and subjected to meta-analyses (Akoensi, Koehler, Lösel, & Humphreys, 2012; Arias, Arce, & Vilariño, 2013; Babcock, Green, & Robie, 2004; Coulthard et al., 2010; Feder & Wilson, 2005; Ferrer-Perez & Bosch-Fiol, 2016) with mixed results. A body of quantitative studies on change mechanisms in this population also exists and aspects of this have also been reviewed. Correlates of attrition and methods of encouraging perpetrator motivation to change have been reviewed by Jewell and Wormith (2010) and Saunders (2008). Research on readiness to change has been reviewed by Scott and King (2007). Research on perpetrator typologies and their utility for intervention programs are reviewed by Cavanaugh and Gelles (2005), Hamberger (2008), and Walker, Bowen, Brown, and

¹ University of Ulster, Northern Ireland, Londonderry, United Kingdom

Corresponding Author:

Tony McGinn, University of Ulster, Northern Ireland, Derry/Londonderry BT48 7JL, United Kingdom.
Email: mcginn-a1@email.ulster.ac.uk

Sleath (2015). Ecological factors, including couple dynamics, which affect treatment are reviewed by Stith, McCollum, Amanor-Boadu, and Smith (2012) and Stith et al. (2000). While Stover, Meadows, and Kaufman (2009) summarize studies which have investigated IPV perpetrators and substance abuse. There is an urgent need for further distillation of what we know about changing IPV perpetrators.

This review responds to that need, by bringing together a group of studies which have provided insights into perpetrators' own perspective on how they change. It is another part of the jigsaw which will support further perpetrator program development. In particular, it should be considered alongside a recent review of survivor perspectives on perpetrator change (McGinn, Taylor, McColgan, & Lagdon, 2015) which highlighted the complexity in this field, the formidable barriers to change which survivors perceived, and the need for systematic trialing of perpetrator program components.

Method

The Literature Search

The literature search produced 8,305 hits and is reported in a published case study on social work literature searching (see Authors, 2014). **[AQ2]** Fourteen search facilities were searched: MEDLINE, Google Scholar, Web of Science, Social Care Online, Proquest Health, International Bibliography of the Social Sciences, EMBASE, SCOPUS, National Criminal Justice Research Service, Cumulative Index to Nursing and Applied Health, Sociological Abstracts, Social Services Abstracts, PsycINFO, and Applied Social Science Index and Abstracts. Appendix A presents the search terms used. Using the following selection criteria, 27 articles were selected:

- Study participants had to be over 18 years old.
- Study participants had to be, or had to be or had to have been, male IPV perpetrators. Three studies also included a minority of female partner-violence perpetrators, amounting to approximately 2% of primary study participants. The impact of data from a cohort this small was not thought to have had the potential to influence review findings.
- Studies which investigated both perpetrator and survivor perspectives were accepted as relevant as long as some data pertaining to the perpetrator perspective were reported separately.
- Articles had to describe a study that captured data on the views of some aspect of a program of intervention for perpetrators.
- "Gray literature" such as research theses and government reports were accepted.
- Articles dating back to 1983 were included, this was the year that Pence and Paymar (1983) published an introduction to the Duluth model of practice for work with IPV perpetrators.

Method of Synthesis

The synthesis of qualitative findings from separate studies can be broadly classified as either descriptive or interpretive (Evans, 2002). Descriptive data synthesis is achieved through narrative and tabulation; interpretive synthesis is achieved by one or more of the processes employed in qualitative analysis. We have applied both treatments in this review.

Thematic summary of primary study findings. Primary study themes and authors' conclusions are summarized in Tables 1–6. Bell (2011) and Powell (2002) discuss the importance of situating findings, from studies of complex phenomena, within their theoretical perspective. Because of the theoretical and political contentions in this field, Tables 1–6 group primary study findings under the different theoretical positions adopted on the topic. The resulting summary tables provide readers with an overview of the data set, a summary key primary study themes, and an insight into the range of issues explored in these studies.

Interpretive account of primary study reports. We employed grounded theory methods to code and create an interpretive account of the primary studies. Grounded theory was deemed the best fit for the task. Firstly, it promotes a skeptical standpoint on emergent findings. Perpetrators of IPV, like several offender groupings, have been found to score high on social desirability scales; a measure of interviewees' inclination toward socially acceptable responses (see Sugarman & Hotaling, 1997). There is an obligation on qualitative researchers to remain aware of socially desirable responding (Craig, Robyak, Torosian, & Hummer, 2006; DeAndrea, Tom Tong, Liang, Levine, & Walther, 2012; Henning & Holdford, 2006). Thus, during our interpretive analysis in this review, we remained mindful of the fact that only one of the primary studies (Gondolf & Hanneken, 1987) reported evidence that interviewees had indeed changed.

Secondly, grounded theory provides a framework for data coding, leading to the generation of new theory. This fits with the review authors' pragmatic perspective on qualitative research as one half of the theory generation/theory testing (qualitative/quantitative) iteration.

The method employed for interpretive synthesis can be viewed as a series of steps:

1. The studies were imported into NVivo (Version 11, software for the analysis of qualitative data) to complete this part of the review. The use of NVivo to help mine, and synthesize, qualitative study reports has been illustrated previously (Baxter, Killoran, Kelly, & Goyder, 2010; Houghton et al., 2017; Thomas & Harden, 2008).
2. Primary data (quotations from study participants) and primary study authors' descriptions, discussions, and conclusions were reviewed and given descriptive codes. This use of primary study reports as a data set has been illustrated in previous syntheses: Coren and Fisher

Table 1. Findings From Studies Completed From a Feminist Perspective.^a

Study ^b	Key Themes Relating to Change Processes	Primary Authors' Commentary, Relating to Change Processes
Gondolf (1987) 12 American men were interviewed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-esteem • Long-term personal growth • Masculinity • Awareness of emotions • Empathy • "Time-out" • Group cohesion 	Authors suggest that more needs to be done to bring men onto programs. Programs create breathing space for partners and provide a reference point for partner-violent men, which allows them to test changes within themselves. Men must be prepared for a long change process and programs need to be extended to provide after-care.
Dobash (1999) interviewed 122 British men, also reported in Dobash (2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimizing/blaming • Judicial mandates • Controlling behavior • Partner empowerment • Sustaining change 	Authors suggest that some men cannot or will not change despite the nature of intervention. Some men change somewhat when held to account judicially. Men who begin to regulate their own behavior also change associated attitudes. It is important to change discourse to that which rejects violence. It is important for perpetrators to acknowledge the harm they have perpetrated.
Brownlee (2004) analyzed 88 written self-reports of Canadian men's views on a perpetrator program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills development • Dealing with anger • Recognition of abusive behavior • Taking responsibility • Developing empathy • Locus of control • Safe environments 	Feedback was notably positive given that it was anonymous, and participants were under no obligation to write anything. There was no common thread to the negative feedback received. The study authors suggest that this was a particularly effective group, with a respectful and safe approach, and question its generalizability.

^aTables 1–6 group primary study findings under the different theoretical positions adopted on the topic. These should be considered as nominal groupings based, primarily, on authors' references to theory, and secondarily upon their departmental affiliations (their university faculty or school). ^bStudies are identified by their first author only.

(2006); McGinn, Taylor, McColgan, and Lagdon (2015); and Kearney (2001). This approach is also in keeping with the guidance provided on the use of grounded theory techniques in qualitative synthesis (Pope, Mays, & Popay, 2007; Saini & Shlonsky, 2012).

3. Descriptive coding generated a large body of coded material, over 110,000 words. Descriptive codes were grouped according to dominant themes to form data categories. The dominant data categories were explored using grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) principles: Category properties and dimensions were identified by comparisons across the descriptive coding.
4. Data categories which had the potential to deepen our understanding of perpetrator change processes were transformed into narrative descriptions including quotations from primary data for illustration.

authors, was that a certain level of motivation must be intrinsic. For example:

You can put a guy in jail and tell him the only way he is going to get out is take a counselling and he'll do it to get and not to really fix the problem. The bottom line is that you have to decide to do it. That can't be forced. (Gondolf & Hanaken, 1987, p. 185)

Insights into the type of motivation that perpetrators draw upon while engaging in perpetrator programs may prove useful to program developers and policy makers in this field. Firstly, there appeared to be a difference between program participants wanting to change, because it is the right thing to do, and their wanting to change because it helps them get what they want. Consider the following description, from a prison inmate, of the change process he had embarked upon:

I was very resistant to treatment as there was a war going on inside me... what do they want from me?... Then slowly I actually saw myself open up against my will... hard stuff that touched also my most intimate, personal life... I actually mean the most negative things in my inner self... I was into murky business, I was into violence against my family, violence against both the wife and outsiders because I was living within rigid frames, a mentality of principles and honour.... Here, I actually connected with my feelings.... Actually, it allowed me to process who I would like to be... I am not going to win this woman back. But I won more than that—myself. I was privileged to be able to gain myself. (a perpetrator interviewed by Buchbinder & Eisikovits, 2008, p. 619)

Findings

Summary of Primary Study Themes AQ3

Interpretive Synthesis

IPV perpetrators' motivation. It is no surprise that program participants' motivation to change was a key theme across the data set. It was the most common data category identified, with 21 of 27 primary studies provided insights into perpetrators' motivation. Different levels and types of motivation were perceived to facilitate or detract from the change process, but the most common insight proffered by interviewees, and primary study

Table 2. Findings From Studies Completed From Clinical Psychological Perspectives.

Study	Key Themes Relating to Change Processes	Primary Authors' Commentary, Relating to Change Processes
Buchbinder (2008) interviewed 83 Israeli men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anxiety • Meaning in existence • Emotional being • Ego • Male aggressiveness • Language as meaning creation 	Therapy with violent men should involve: a focus on existential anxiety, the struggle for authenticity, and taking responsibility.
Lindsay (2006) interviewed 72 Canadian men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common experiences • Altruism • Group cohesion • Imitative behavior • Self-disclosure • Self-understanding • Hope • Learning form interaction • Catharsis 	The most important aspects of group work for the men were the knowledge they acquired about domestic violence, being able to share common concerns, and helping other group members.
Rosenberg (2003) interviewed 70 American men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group support • Facilitator-participant alliance 	Study participants believed the interpersonal aspects of group work were key. Specific strategies for handling anger and other emotions were also important.
Scott (2000) interviewed nine Canadian men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication/assertiveness • Knowledge about abuse • Responsibility for personal power • Triggers for change. 	Authors emphasized the importance of the development of empathy for their partners' victimization and reduced dependency on perpetrators' partners.
Smith (2011) interviewed 18 British men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing anger • Communication skills • Assertiveness skills • Thinking before acting • Taking responsibility for personal power 	In order to accept responsibility for personal power, it is suggested that personal meanings corresponding to self-efficacy (as opposed to lack of control), assertiveness (as opposed to aggression or passiveness), and self-acceptance (as opposed to self-hatred/denigration) are required to change.
Virzi (2012) interviewed 15 American men, six had not completed a program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation • Treatment engagement • Group work 	Treatment should be tailored to the perpetrator's level of motivation; it takes time for perpetrators to become engaged in treatment; the group environment is an important facilitator of change; and program noncompleters felt judged and pigeonholed and did not appear to accept the view that they were IPV perpetrators.

Note. IPV = intimate partner violence.

Other primary study authors also offer examples of this type of motivation (Gondolf & Hanneken, 1987; Gray, Broady, et al., 2014; Silvergleid & Mankowski, 2006; Takano, 2014); which appears to be a deep rooted and linked to the interviewees' self-concept; we might refer to it as "existential motivation."

Another type of motivation, which was evident in several studies, was the motivation to make changes in behavior in order to regain one's family. Gray et al. (2014) [AQ4] described how relationship breakdowns cause men to drop out of treatment. Parra-Cardona et al. (2013), Gondolf and Haneken (1987), and Silvergled and Mankowski (2006) offer similar insights into this cause and effect mind-set, which we might term "functional motivation":

Several of the men talked about how they were motivated by fear of losing their wives or the love of their children. The first and foremost [reason why I changed] would be because I'm totally in love with my wife and my family and that would be the number one reason why I would change. (Silvergled & Mankowski, p. 151)

There was also an insight into how some men were motivated to attend treatment primarily for the purposes of self-preservation.

The Men's Group . . . she mentioned it to me, I went back to the guy at Belco and I told him about it, cause the court is easier if you're into some kind of a program, and he says, "Oh yeah" and he set it all up for me. (a perpetrator interviewed by Warters, 1993, p. 113)

When Chovanec (2012) asked study participants men why they attended their program, five of the eight men referred to a court mandate.

The implication here for practitioners in this area may be: If men attend a program because they must, they may only go through the motions of a change process in acquiescence to their program group peers and group facilitators. Consider the following extracts:

The explanations the men gave me for why they were abusive often sound surprisingly similar to those found in the aggression and

Table 3. Findings From Studies Completed From Social Work–Related Perspectives (Psychosocial and Strengths-Based Perspectives).

Study	Key Themes Relating to Change Processes	Primary Authors' Commentary, Relating to Change Processes
Aguirre (2009) interviewed 15 Latino Californian men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nonjudgmental group dynamics • Communication skills • Taking responsibility • Making better choices • Machismo beliefs 	Helping men who batter identify their strengths can redirect negative behavior and identify resources and competencies as an alternative to violence.
Chovanec (2012) interviewed eight American men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being mandated to attend treatment • Wanting to learn • Nonacknowledgment of an anger problem • Contradictions in narratives 	Authors report that a key element of the change process is the opportunity to learn from each other's stories in a group. Engagement in the process was found to improve over time, in a trajectory which was deemed comparable to other clinical populations such as service users with depressive or anxiety symptoms.
Chovanec (2014) interviewed 14 American men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Learning things" • Motivation to learn 	Open-ended groups which accept new recruits at any point mean that men already in treatment can be of value to those beginning the treatment process, by sharing their stories of change.
Gray and Brady (2014) interviewed 21 Australian men via telephone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation • Relationship status 	A separation can negatively affect motivation and behavior change processes; professionals working with men who use violence are advised to raise the topic of relationship status, to prevent attrition, and to broaden motivations.
Gray and Lewis (2014) interviewed 14 Australian men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative peer discussions, external to group sessions • Positive group discussion enhancing client motivation 	Authors highlight the complex etiology of violence and highlight potential problems of group work with partner-violent men alongside the benefits.
Pandya and Gingerich (2002) interviewed six American men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncontrollable violence • Violence as harmful • Taking responsibility • New learning • Self-understanding 	Authors concluded that treatment needs are different for different perpetrators. Learning new communication skills was discussed as an important facilitator of change, while masculine identity was discussed as a key barrier to the change process.
Simmons (2006) interviewed eight African American men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spirituality • Group processes • Prevalent culture 	Perpetrator experiences led them to believe that a part of the socialization of African American men is to teach them to react with aggression.

Table 4. Findings From Studies Completed From a Pragmatic or "What Works" Perspective.

Study	Key Themes Relating to Change Processes	Primary Authors' Commentary, Relating to Change Processes
Montella (2008) interviewed 17 Hawaiian (American) men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involving partners in treatment • Support from the group is important 	Just under half of study participants took responsibility, but 16 of 17 were satisfied with the program. Study participants reported that behavior management tools for controlling anger were helpful; more support from family and community would be helpful.
Roguski (2014) interviewed 25 New Zealand men and one woman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program aftercare • Increasing age and maturity • Mentoring and support-based connections • Nonviolent frame of reference • Social marketing • Developing empathy • Hitting "rock bottom" 	Sociocultural barriers to change were highlighted including widely accepted and ingrained patriarchal beliefs, macho constructions, and violence normalization. Alcohol and drug are barriers to change. Participants stressed that it is vital for partners to simultaneously access some form of transformative support. Study participants suggested that their partners generally did not trust their efforts to change and, as a consequence, would create situations that tested them. The need to access postprogram support was highlighted, as was a general distrust of health professionals.
Smith (2007) interviewed 17 American men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perpetrators' minimization of violent behavior • Perpetrators' justification of violent behavior • Perpetrators' humiliation and shame • Patriarchy • Entitlement • Superiority 	If we accept battering as a person's attempt to regulate intense, unwanted emotions, and then the techniques of dialectal behavior therapy could be easily applied to target battering behaviors. Helping batterers overcome their inability to recognize and identify feelings, making them aware of their self-deception, and improving their emotional intelligence generally, may be appropriate interventions.

Table 5. Findings From Studies Completed From Social Constructivist and Constructionist Perspectives.

Study	Key Themes Relating to Change Processes	Primary Authors' Commentary, Relating to Change Processes
Keltanen (2009) analyzed transcripts, relating to five men, from group therapy sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denial and blaming • Lack of awareness and insight • The role of "time-out" 	The authors propose that the turning point in the therapeutic process was the reformulation of the problem. The better the men understood that the problem arises from within themselves, the better they were able to regulate their emotional reactions and behavioral responses.
Shamai (2010) interviewed 25 Israeli men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapy as a learning context • Learning self-control • Treatment as a turning point 	Authors suggest that study participants are still using a power schema to structure their world view; when we look behind the study participants' utterances, we find treatment to have had a complex and contradictory impact.
Stefanakis (2000) interviewed 20 Canadian men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process of change is cyclical (advances and setbacks) • Active maintenance of change • Meaning negotiated from events or factors • Struggle to be accountable while still being redeemable 	The manner in which we engage men in perpetrators' programs has direct impact on outcomes. Certain cultural standards may facilitate the use of violence and prevent change. Consequently, men's desistance from violence cannot be seen as a completely individual effort.
Takano (2014) interviewed six men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Violence and abuse in perpetrators' lives • Becoming a perpetrator • Perpetrators hurting families, • Perpetrators' turning away from violence 	Methods of intervention should not be limited to confrontation and reinforcement but should also require engagement in a reflective process and internal transformation of an existential nature.

Table 6. Ungrouped Studies From Miscellaneous Perspectives (Including Sociocultural, Phenomenological, Desistance Theory, Systems Theory, Social Interactionist, and Discursive Perspectives).

Study	Key Themes Relating to Change Processes	Primary Authors' Commentary, Relating to Change Processes
Newmark et al. (2007) interviewed 32 American men and one woman participated in focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program design • Program delivery 	Study participant feedback on programs varied regionally. Some were believed to be too rigid, too expensive, and badly organized; others believed the programs helped them, promoted self-reflection, and imparted new and useful skills
Parra-Cardona et al. (2013) interviewed 21 Latino American men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination and racism • Latino values • Sharing struggles • Managing anger • Group leaders • Challenging participants • Egalitarian relationships 	Authors summarized study participants' discourse on change using the following discourse montage: "recognizing change as a lifetime challenge," "change is demonstrated through actions rather than words," "group leaders help me to change," "group helps me to change," "I need help outside the group," and "you become aware."
Silvergleid (2006) interviewed nine American men	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitators' credibility and skill • Group support accountability • Modeling on peers • "Time-out" skills • Intrinsic motivation to change 	The findings demonstrate the importance of obtaining multiple perspectives on change processes and support ecological and systems models of batterer intervention.
Warters (1992) interviewed 48 American men also reported in Warters (1993)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abuse has a functional purpose • Minimization • Men adopt a number of distinct roles in group therapy 	The change process is outlined: from being the boss, to meeting with resistance, to becoming confused, to learning about another perspective, and then adopting it.

interpersonal violence literature. (perpetrator interviewed by Warters, 1993, p. 38)

I'm learning the words like "denial" and "defence mechanism" . . . (perpetrator interviewed by Chovanec, 2012, p. 368)

What would prevent future violence? Because I know that a woman is to be respected and not abused. (perpetrator interviewed by Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh, & Lewis, 2000, p. 159)

A total of nine studies included insights such as these, across the data set, which the current review authors offer as evidence of program participants learning program language. Parroting program sound bites in this way may be indicative of a low level of engagement with intervention and low levels of motivation to change.

Group work. Seventeen of the 27 studies provided insights into perpetrators perspective of the group work element of intervention. Peers and group practitioners were seen as key drivers of change by many men. Peer group norms are known to have a strong effect on offending behavior, and the group dynamic was referred to throughout the data. Interviewees often found the group-based format, in treatment, daunting:

I was afraid to meet people who are drunk, violent, you know, incorrigible people, and I did not perceive in this way . . . but I was not the only one who felt like that. (Shamai & Buchbinder, 2010, p. 1436)

However, there was also evidence that those who persevered and embraced group discussion offered positive feedback on it. It became a new experience and ultimately a cathartic one:

It was wow! These people are just letting go in here. How am I going to do this? I don't know of any way I'm going to be able to let go . . . But as the days went on, it was just like, it was water running inside of me. It finally started sinking in. In about the fourth week I really got into it because . . . God, these guys are here, they're telling things. (Silvergleid & Mankowski, 2006, p. 150)

For some, the group became a very strong source of support:

Many probationers commented that the weekly contact and personal sharing with other people decreased their isolation and made them feel the group was "like a family." Several respondents said that they stayed in touch with other group members after the program ended and now considered them close friends. (Rosenberg, 2003, p. 309)

They became less isolated:

The group appeared to offer them a feeling of acceptance that they had not previously received from other men, especially their fathers, and firm direction and correction that enabled them to make changes in themselves and enhanced their self-esteem. (Gondolf & Hanneken, 1987, p. 185)

It was almost like a band of brothers, a group of people trying to achieve the same goal and after a while it just sank in and I was able to share (study participant interviewed by Virzi, 2012, p. 32)

But it was not all about support; it was also about holding each other to account:

And the other thing that works great in a group format is . . . we didn't cut anyone any slack . . . if someone was in denial—I remember one incident where this guy was all upset about his wife and didn't trust her and was following her around. And he didn't believe that he was a stalker. But he's basically stalking her—we as a group just came down real hard on him. They came down hard on me [too], and you know, I learned from it. (Silvergleid & Mankowski, 2006, p. 148)

Lindsay, Roy, Turcotte, and Montminy (2006) prioritized the exploration of interaction between group members in their study, they also point out the potential downside:

Certain TFs (therapeutic factors) such as universality (identifying commonalities with group peers) are preconditions for change, which could explain its importance at the start . . . but this energy can just as easily take a negative course, i.e. by men minimising their problem behaviours or not assuming responsibility, it is essential that group leaders be able to channel this energy toward achieving the group's goals. (p. 44)

In summary, group work was an important part of the change process for many perpetrators. The message for perpetrator program developers here is that measures to circumvent perpetrators' initial trepidation about attending group work may be of value. The group work format is appreciated by perpetrators, and they see it as integral to the change process, but peer support among IPV perpetrators is not without its risks and may need carefully managed.

Relationship dynamics. Seven primary study authors, without in any way minimizing violent behavior, explored how intrare-relationship issues were ignored in group work with partner-violent men. The data suggest that unhelpful relationship dynamics, such as circumstances in which both partners were abusive, were a barrier to change. However, it could also be seen that exploring unhelpful relationship dynamics with IPV perpetrators is fraught with difficulty. There were numerous examples of men blaming their partner for their own perpetration of abuse. It could be seen that an exploration of an unhelpful relationship dynamic, during treatment, is likely to be seized upon as an opportunity to divert blame. The following insight into an extremely manipulative partner violent should be considered:

My first phase of abuse was verbal . . . I was very good at manipulating women. But then once I'd get them in my corner, I'd take their identity from them. I'd strip them of all their rights . . . I didn't need money, cars, or nothing like that, cause I'd take their soul, and I'd possess them, like an object. Then I'd feed them my thoughts, . . . Cause my verbal abuse, it was all acting. But it was abuse, because what came out of my mouth was very abusive. Like I used to get all in an uproar . . . Just to put the fear into her, to get control over her. But I knew in my heart I wasn't going to hit her . . . it was an intimidation thing, you know, like the look that I was giving her. The things that make her scared, I'd make her think, make her imagine an ugly scene that I'd do to her. I'd tell her something like, "I'll mop your ass up." . . . Like when I asked a woman, I'd say, "Listen here, you better give me \$50 on Friday so I can go out, or I'm going to bust your ass." Knowing that if they don't give me the fifty dollars, you know, they don't give it to me. But nine out of ten times they'd give it to me because they were scared.

[So the anger was like a front, to try to control her?]

Right, right. But then when they broke out of my spell of that, of the verbal abuse, then I'd take it to the second phase. Which is the

physical phase, physical abuse. Where I had to put my hands on them, slap them up against the wall and stuff like that. Because my words didn't scare them no more. You know, they knew eventually, after a few words, he's not going to do nothing. They knew that it was bullshit behind them words. They'd be like, "I know you ain't going to do nothing, you just keep talking that shit." See, now, they are challenging me now. So now it's a physical thing. I have to use my hands, and once you use your hands, you're capable of doing anything. (study participant interviewed by Warters, 1993, p. 74)

Practitioners and program developers may value this insight into IPV perpetrators who see their relationship primarily as a power dynamic, built solely around their own needs, and who are capable of this level of manipulation. One might question the appropriateness of group-based psychoeducation for perpetrators who need to change from this starting point.

Cognitive distortions. A range of cognitive distortions crop up in primary study participants' dialogues. Insights for this data category were drawn from 14 of the studies. In the context of partner violence, cognitive distortions appear to evolve around fixed ideas about relationships, violence, and the way of the world. They support IPV perpetrators' view that "they are not characterologically flawed despite engaging in behavior we (and they themselves) would label as unacceptable and reprehensible" (Stefanakis, 2000, p. 50). They can be promoted by patriarchal and family contexts:

My jefe (father) used to tell me that sometimes you have to hit a woman to keep her in line or she will disobey you. He would say it was for their own good. (Aguirre, 2009, p. 25)

They often reflect a very hostile perspective on the world:

You got to get revenge, he (my father) said, "If it takes you two years, you get it. Otherwise people are always going to take advantage of you." He said, "At the least you get the satisfaction of knowing that you got them back." . . . I think that he taught me that violence was not just okay, but that was the way you handled your problems. You got revenge, you made people see things your way. (a study participant interviewed by Warters, 1993, p. 44)

Cognitive distortions are used to minimize:

Well it's no big deal. I'm not saying that I'm not as bad as the next one, but I know people who've actually beat up a woman like they've beat up a guy, with kicking in the head. I'd never do that to a girl. (Dobash et al., 2000, p. 22)

And justify:

Anger is sometimes justifiable. You don't ask her to come and take the beating . . . but . . . like the credit card issue . . . she is ruining your credit. (Pandya & Gingerich, 2002, p. 55)

Cognitive distortions appear to be deeply embedded, but there were examples of partner-violent men being made aware of them:

It's important to talk about machismo in group because it is like a negative masculinity. Machismo is like being a wild animal. . . . It's like getting home and feeling proud because my wife obeys me without questioning. It's like getting home and saying to my wife, "Take off my shoes now!" (Parra-Cardona et al., 2013, p. 119)

Perhaps more than any other finding reported here, these insights into abnormal worldviews provide an indication of the huge challenge perpetrator program developers face.

Emotional dysregulation. Eleven of the 27 studies reported findings relating to the management of perpetrator emotions. These reports provided an insight into what it is like, not to have the skills to react appropriately to emotions, for example:

Barry noticed that his violence cycle started with butterflies or being tied up with anxiety. He recognized his anger as a defence to these underlying feelings. In his own words . . . I have done the wrong thing. I have acted really inappropriately. It's easier to keep the front up and just keep being angry . . . you've lost everything you know. You haven't got a leg to stand on. There is nowhere to go . . . (Brown, 2004, p. 47)

There are also clues as to how emotional immaturity comes about. The following extract suggests that social norms and social learning may play a part:

Andrew . . . his father was gregarious and although he says he loved him, Andrew felt that he did not really know him. He was belted on a weekly basis when he was growing up, by both parents. He learned to manage his feelings by minimization. His father would frequently say, almost in the form of a mantra: "Be a man. Dry your eyes . . . grow up." (Brown, 2004, p. 48)

And there are insights into how it is tackled in treatment:

We have a thing that they call a daily log and they write down how many times you get angry or what happens on that and I was surprised that through a given day all the little things that can make you angry. . . . I thought that it's the little things that I been picking up on. (Chovanec, 2012, p. 368)

Like that was a big revelation. How all of these emotions really . . . people act it out in anger and it wasn't just me. A lot of people don't know they've got the emotions. They're all there, but we act them out as anger. (Takano, 2014, p. 214)

Again, macho self-concepts are relevant here, talking about emotions was a big step for study participants:

He had not used feeling words in his communications before and anticipated that the listener, specifically his girlfriend, would make fun of him. . . . When he began these classes his co-workers would

make fun of him, but now they respect the changes in him. (Pandya & Gingerich, 2002, p. 52)

In summary, perpetrators and primary study authors believe that understanding and managing emotions is part of the change process. We would add that therapeutic work which targets emotions is complex and skilled work and would have liked to have seen how the effects of this type of work was being monitored in perpetrators' families. Could it be linked to greater feelings of safety for example?

Social constructions. Thirteen primary studies reported how, for some study participants, violence was engrained in their lives:

My dad used to hit me all the time and the more I cried the more he hit me. He used to tell me that it was how men were made: by hitting them. After a while you begin to believe what they tell you. I guess I didn't know any better. (study participant interviewed by Aguirre, 2009, p. 25)

In some cases, unhelpful social constructions were driven by particular ethnicities:

I had to be a machista also to get respect. My dad taught us that men were in charge, we had to be macho. Women were supposed to do what we said, respect, they had to do what they were told or they did not know their role. (study participant interviewed by Aguirre, 2009, p. 26)

It could also be argued that these constructions are embedded across Western societies (the majority of studies were based in western cultures), for example:

You hear it on the streets, or on the basketball court, on the football field if you play. "You throw like a girl," you know. It's like if you're (like) a girl, you're just weak and fragile . . . and are portrayed as a sissy. (a study participant interviewed by Warters, 1993, p. 53)

On occasion, authors linked men's violence to shifts in social constructions and an emerging realignment in gender norms:

As I see it, these men are at the "rough edge" of an ongoing social/cultural struggle over changing roles and power relationships between men and women. (Warters, 1993, p. 2)

The men explained their abuse as a reaction to their failed macho complex. (Gondolf & Hanaken, 1987, p. 177)

Finally, in relation to social constructions, patriarchal attitudes were clearly a barrier to change within a number of primary study participants:

I guess because it's a man's kingdom . . . you know . . . your home . . . a man takes enough shit on the road all day . . . you know what I mean? You got traffic to deal with . . . you got the boss telling you what to do . . . I just want to go home and shut that door and say God, now I can sleep. . . . I don't know why I use them

words . . . like I said I don't go to work and call my boss a son-of-a-bitch . . . but you go home and call your old lady a bitch and I don't know why. (a study participant interviewed by Smith, 2007, p. 199)

Self-esteem, both a barrier to, and a driver of change. The issue of self-esteem was visible in many of the narratives provided by study participants; this data category was built on extracts from 10 primary studies. It was woven into the discussions of their identity, emotions, and motivation. Some IPV perpetrators appear to identify strongly with concepts of masculinity and assessed their personal worth in terms of masculinity. For some study participants, this was a barrier to engagement with treatment. Primary study author Takano (2014) states that in today's society, men are bound by concepts of manliness and are obliged not to seek help or show their weaknesses to others. Takano quotes a participant:

Most people, most anger issues are in men and men are just naturally born to not want to accept help. It's the way society teaches and it's also a sign of weakness. If I accept help, then it must mean I'm not good enough . . . when you also accept that you need help, you also accept failure. (p. 171)

There were also examples of self-esteem being a motivation to commence treatment:

My wife reported me to the police and I was arrested. It was shameful for my daughters to see me being taken away by the police. There was one time when we were at the beach and my wife was getting on my nerves. There were other people there who know me, and I started screaming like crazy, I couldn't get a grip on myself. I was like mad. So I started therapy after realizing that the situation is getting worse. I didn't feel in control of myself. . . . All this was embarrassing in front of everyone, that I cannot control myself and I felt bad. (a study participant interviewed by Buchbinder & Eisikovits, 2008, p. 265)

Self-esteem issues were also at the heart of some violence perpetration. Brown (2004) explores this with one of her study participants and offered the following insight:

"I feel vulnerable then scared and finally angry." The vulnerability appeared to be related to a sense of shame or embarrassment as Barry (the study participant) said " . . . it's tied up with being worried about, it's a performance based thing. Worried about how I am going to look in front of everyone . . . being really embarrassed or stuffing something up totally." (p. 47)

Working with self-esteem issues in treatment is a complex challenge. There were indications in the data that some programs and facilitators had struck some kind of balance in dealing with ego. The following extract from Warters's (1993) thesis shows how one participant held on to some kind of self-worth while realigning his self-concept and developing a new fulcrum for his self-esteem.

Concern about status and success seemed very common among my sample. For instance, the following man talked about his conception of manhood:

I take life where you have to prove yourself every day, in your job, in your family. Before I used to have to prove that I was the masculine person, I was the boss, I was the king of the heap, you know. It's like, he who dies with the most toys wins. That was my philosophy. Where now, my philosophy is to make it through another day, as calmly as you can, quietly get your job done . . . you still have to prove yourself, but I try to prove myself now in a different way. That's all, it's not that I want to be King Farouk anymore. I just want to . . . I'm getting too old for this shit. (p. 59)

Discussion

Differences in Theoretical Perspectives

It can be seen from Tables 1–6 that primary study findings are quite varied. Qualitative research is susceptible to bias toward verification (Silverman, 2010), and there are examples, in the material reviewed, of similar data being interpreted in quite different ways. If pressed, we could summarize that feminist researchers emphasized the importance of perpetrators taking responsibility and that change is a long and difficult process; psychology-based researchers varied between psychodynamic and cognitive behavioral perspectives, with their respective emphases on self-understanding and changing thought patterns; researchers from social work schools were more likely to report findings relating to participant motivation, group-work effects, the practical considerations of delivering intervention, and the potential negative effects of the intervention studied; “what works” researchers highlighted the barriers to change, in particular; and constructivists and constructionists were more likely to offer a stages of change model in their findings. However, it should be noted that primary study findings did not polarize around theoretical perspectives in a clear manner.

Perpetrator Program Development

Different types of perpetrator motivations. A pressing consideration for this review is to provide leads for perpetrator program development. Review findings suggest that perpetrators carry different types of motivation into perpetrator programs. The insights into existentially motivated program participant are more likely to sustain change, and grow as a person, in a way which transcends the functional drivers of abuse. These men understand that “the violence and the willingness to change it are both intentional acts which go beyond the specific behavioral level and define the person's being in the world” (Buchbinder & Eisikovits, 2008, p. 619). If someone is motivated to change their behavior because they want to be a different person, or even the best person they can be, then they are less susceptible to lapses in behavior as they are challenged by each new turn in their life. Conversely, if someone is motivated to change their behavior so that they can return home, what

happens to that motivation after they have returned home? This is a review finding derived from the cohort of psychology-based primary studies, which is important background to the assessment of candidates for intervention. If we can get to the heart of someone's motivation to change, we are in a better position to establish appropriate treatment targets for them and to avoid the allocation of scarce resources to perpetrators who are interested in treatment for reasons of self-preservation only. Primary studies undertaken from **AQ5**

Perpetrator motivation was of interest to researchers from each of the perspectives outlined in Tables 1–5. There is a notable difference between the findings on motivation, reported here, and thinking about engagement in intervention and stages of change models (Begun et al., 2003; Eckhardt & Utschig, 2007; Scott & Wolfe, 2003). Stages of change models carry the implication that change will happen, if the perpetrator contemplates it, make plans, takes steps toward change, and sees the benefits of change. If we consider that some program participants are there for reasons of self-preservation, or for functional gain, it highlights the prospect of no change and superficial change. Feminist researchers contributed this insight, which are less obvious within a stages of change paradigm.

Gender-related issues in work with partner-violent men. Gender-related issues, namely, patriarchy, masculine identities, and male socialization toward violence, are threaded throughout the findings tables. There is also a corresponding focus on accountability for behavior, as a response to these problems. Education-type work appeared to be the dominant mechanism by which accountability-to-self was promoted. In many cases, straightforward education-type work appeared to strike a chord with study participants. It helped them to understand the effects of abuse on families, helped them to identify patriarchal attitudes, and the range of abusive behaviors that their partners' may have been subjected to. Also, in relation to educative work, tools such as “time-out” (interrupting escalating situations by physically leaving the room) were seen as key learning by study participants.

Group work with partner-violent men. Study participants also referred to relationships with other group-work participants, and facilitators, in a positive way. The million dollar question, which few study authors addressed, is how the newfound friendships and supportive group dynamics described, actually translated into violence desistance. If the primary study authors all began their study report by outlining positive experimental evidence of the efficacy of the program, they were exploring, then we could hypothesize that providing partner-violent men with supportive environments in which to share, could well be the “active ingredient” (Campbell et al., 2007, p. 456) that makes the difference. However, with the exception of Gondolf and Hanaken (1987; who interviewed ex-perpetrators who had been violence free for 10 months or more, as reported by their partners) studies,

primary study authors offered no reference to empirical evidence of actual verified change in their study participants.

All we can really conclude is that perpetrators liked the group environment and were able to explain how it helped them (through behavior modeling, being held to task, and feeling supported). While insights such as that are useful clues for program development, we should also acknowledge that this is a significant deficit in this body of evidence: We are building a body of qualitative evidence, about understanding change processes in perpetrators, who may not have changed, while on programs which may or may not be effective (Feder, Wilson, & Austin, 2008). Looking more widely, at what we have learned about bringing other antisocial groups together for therapeutic work, we should be aware that it is not always effective. Much cited examples of doing harm include “deviancy training” (Dishion, McCord, & Poulin, 1999) and “scared straight” (Petrosino, Turpin-Petrosino, & Buehler, 2003). The cathartic benefit which some primary study participants associated with group work should ring alarm bells: “Emotional catharsis, especially when not accompanied by a constructive cognitive restructuring of troubling situations, often backfires to produce heightened long-term negative emotions” (Littrell cited by Lilienfeld, 2007, p. 61). In relation to the role of the group dynamic, in driving change, we would suggest that partner-violent men are positive about it, but further research with reformed perpetrators (as confirmed by their [ex-]partners) is needed.

Barriers to change. This review highlights significant challenges for program designers and practitioners in dealing with perpetrators’ cognitive distortions and high levels of emotional dysregulation. The term cognitive distortion is adopted here, but some primary study authors also presented abuse-facilitating beliefs as an education deficit. The difference in terminology reflects the difference between clinical psychological treatment of the problem in individuals and a more broad-brush educative approach to imparting new ideas, as is practicable in group settings. It is a difference which is at the center of the divide between sociological and psychological perspectives on partner-violence perpetration (Dutton, 2008). It is argued here that cognitive distortions are often too embedded, and too dangerous, to be left to educative work conducted within the binds of traditional group-work formats. It is likely that in many cases, in-depth clinical work, with individuals, will be required to build real change from the new knowledge that study participants often reported in primary studies.

This review has also synthesized data which illustrate the mechanics and implications of emotional dysregulation in partner-violent men. It is clear that, as with cognitive distortions, this problem can have deep roots in study participants’ past and can be an enduring and embedded problem. Emotional dysregulation is a pervasive symptom across mental health and offender populations, including sex offenders (Ward, Polaschek, & Beech, 2006) those challenged by antisocial personality disorder (ASPD; Zlotnick, 1999), adult attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD; Barkley, 2014), and

borderline personality disorder (BPD; Domes, Schulze, & Herpertz, 2009). Reviewing the literature in these fields, it can be seen that, not surprisingly, there are no references to transformative treatments which could change the face of partner-violence work; much of the prescribed treatment for emotional dysregulation is cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) based. Most perpetrator programs already draw heavily on CBT (Babcock et al., 2004) what we can learn from other areas is that there are highly developed tools for measuring emotional dysregulation (see Gratz, Rosenthal, Tull, Lejuez, & Gunderson, 2006) and that it is better treated in the context of associated clinical conditions, such as ASPD ADHD, or BPD. We should also consider worst case scenarios in relation to these disorders. The National Institute for Health and Social Care Excellence (2009) guidelines highlight that a small proportion of people with personality disorders meet criteria for dangerous and severe personality disorder, a condition which requires bespoke and very long-term treatment.

Findings also suggest that partner-violent men’s self-esteem is a formidable barrier to change. Partner-violent men spoke about their own journeys and internal motivations for change, rather than change being initiated by external forces. In contrast, partner-violence survivors speak about the importance of judicial measures, and their own refusal to accept further abuse as key determinants of change in their violent (ex-)partners (McGinn et al., 2015). These were only nominal themes in the current review data. This discrepancy might be understood in terms of the men’s self-esteem, which is better protected in narratives that present their autonomy and determination. A further discrepancy with McGinn et al.’s review of survivor perspectives on change is the relegation of mental health issues in perpetrators’ dialogues. This too could be linked to self-esteem, a general aversion to help-seeking and the stigma associated with mental health challenges.

Practitioners must negotiate self-esteem issues, maintaining a therapeutic alliance while also challenging men in a variety of ways: challenging their narratives, behaviors, and beliefs. Most of the primary study authors made some reference to the balancing of these tasks, and considering the review data as a whole, it can be seen that there has been a movement away from the openly confrontational approaches of early Duluth informed work (Murphy & Baxter, 1997) to a more therapeutic approach.

Limitations

The empirical relevance of any review is limited by the rigor with which its primary studies have been conducted. It should be acknowledged that nine of these studies have not been subjected to blind peer review (seven are dissertations and two are government reports). Very few primary study authors referred to mechanisms of qualitative study rigor such as secondary coding or data saturation. On the whole methods of data collection and analysis were underspecified, and many authors made no reference to an established qualitative methodology. It should also be noted that none of the primary study authors appeared to make efforts to obtain feedback from the original

intention-to-treat population, which include those men who dropped out of treatment. This shortfall greatly reduces generalizability of the perspectives gathered. However, this is a comparatively large body of evidence from which to complete a qualitative synthesis, and a number of themes are threaded throughout the data set, suggesting some clear messages for future practice, policy, and research.

We should also consider the rigor of data synthesis in this review. Using NVivo, to help manage the coding and organization of extracted data, was more systematic than a narrative approach. It facilitated the development of a data set of coded extracts totaling over 120,000 words. But rigor could have been developed further through independent coding by a second researcher and an intercoder reliability check. As it is, this review is heavily reliant on the lead author's interpretation and integration of primary study findings.

Conclusion

The body of evidence reviewed here is large, and it can be said with some confidence that partner-violent men, who complete perpetrator programs, see value in them. Primary study authors in this review point toward the importance of learning of interruption techniques and new communication skills, learning about emotions and how to manage them, and changing beliefs. There is some alignment here with survivor perspectives on the issue (see McGinn et al., 2015). The extra depth of insight, provided by studies of partner-violent men's perspectives, is important. The centrality of their self-esteem in the process and the different types of motivation which they take to the task of change should be acknowledged in program developments of the future.

The lack of evidence of methodological rigor across the data set should be noted. We should also note that perpetrator and survivor perspectives are not the only perspectives which can help build an understanding how partner-violent men change. We will also benefit from a review of surviving children's perspectives on change in their father, a review of practitioners' perspectives, and a review of quantitative studies of the correlates of change. The current review authors call for further syntheses, systematic reviews, and experimental evaluation of interventions, and we would align ourselves with a growing body of researchers in this field (Grych & Swan, 2012; Murphy, 2013; Semiatin, Torres, LaMotte, Portnoy, & Murphy, 2017; Sullivan, 2013) who call for a more systematic approach to perpetrator program development.

Implications for Practice

- Practitioners should consider assessing potential barriers to change for individual perpetrator program participants. This review found emotional dysregulation, unhelpful relationship dynamics, and cognitive distortions to be key barriers to change.
- Partner-violent men find group-work daunting, at first, but also see group work as key to their efforts to change. They find support in the group environment but also see it as a

means by which they are held to account. Some authors also pointed out the need for group facilitators to manage group dynamics and avoid their being a platform for the minimization of violent behavior.

- Partner-violent men offer particularly positive feedback on learning conflict-interruption techniques and new communication skills during perpetrator programs.
- Study participants in the studies reviewed have linked their violence to macho, patriarchal, and generally poor self-concepts. Practitioners should be aware of the centrality of self-esteem to the perpetration of partner violence and the process of change. Dividends may be had from building new prosocial self-concepts with perpetrators, around which, they can begin building more appropriate self-esteem.

Implications for Policy

- Partner-violent men engage with perpetrator programs for a variety of reasons. This review suggests that a spectrum of motivation types is identifiable, which stretches from, men who want to change the nature of their character, to, men who simply want to avoid a custodial court sentence. Given that abuse survivors, child protection workers and judiciaries are influenced by perpetrator engagement with treatment, it is important that,
 - (a) therapeutic or educative intervention is offered to appropriately motivated perpetrators only;
 - (b) information about real-life desistance from violence-use is used to inform decisions about partner-violent men, rather than, information about engagement in intervention.
- Policies governing therapeutic work with partner-violent men must also make provision for assessing for, and responding to, highly dangerous offenders with deeply embedded antisocial traits, beliefs, and behaviors.

Implications for Future Research

- The method of systematic synthesis described in this review contributes to the ongoing development of an established methodology for the synthesis of qualitative studies. The review authors advocate for the grouping of primary studies according to the varied theoretical positions surrounding a given topic, to help situate the knowledge offered in qualitative studies. The review authors also advocate for the descriptive coding of primary study reports, creating a data set which can be analyzed systematically with the help of appropriate software (such as NVivo).
- On the whole, there is a lack of rigor in the studies synthesized in this review. Qualitative researchers must demonstrate their adherence to an established qualitative method and adopt appropriate mechanisms of rigor if qualitative research is to fulfill its potential within the research mix.
- This review should be considered alongside a review of abuse survivors' perspectives on change (McGinn et al., 2015). Further systematic reviews, drawing together

practitioner perspectives, and children's perspectives, on how partner-violent men change, are required. A number of narrative summaries of quantitative analyses, of the correlates of change have been completed in the past decade, a comprehensive systematic review of these studies would help complete an overview of process-related research in this field.

- As a service user grouping, partner-violence perpetrators are universally acknowledged to be given to minimizing violent behavior and diverting blame. When conducting research with partner-violent men, about how and why they have changed, it is prudent to obtain independent confirmation that they have indeed changed.
- We know little about why men drop out of partner-violence perpetrator programs. Future qualitative research with partner-violent men should be conducted with intention-to-treat populations (which includes treatment dropouts).

Appendix A

Table A1. General Search Formula.^a

Search No.	Search Terms
1	IPV or "partner abuse" or "intimate partner violence" or "domestic violence"
2	"family violence"
3	"intimate partner homicide"
4	((domestic* or partner or marital* or marriage or relationship or wife or wives) adj3 (maltreatment or conflict or violent* or abus* or assault*)) not (working conditions or family work relationship or work-family or youth)
5	partner violent
6	Batterer
7	"who batter"
8	1 or 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 or 7
10	Intervention
11	judici* not judicious*
12	treatment*
13	program* not (program? ing or program? ed)
14	therap*
15	diversion*
16	sanction*
17	Duluth
18	prosecut*
19	10 or 11 or 12 or 13 or 14 or 15 or 16 or 17 or 18
20	"attitude change" or "response to intervention"
21	perception*
22	view*
23	Thoughts
24	perspective*
25	reaction*
26	opinion*
27	belief*
28	qualitative
29	20 or 21 or 22 or 23 or 24 or 25 or 26 or 27 or 28
30	8 and 19 and 29

^aThis formula was adjusted, in minor ways, in response to the varying user interfaces provided by the search facilities.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

References

- Aguirre, J. (2009). *Male Latino batterers: A qualitative study on their experiences with domestic violence and their mental state* (AA11466179). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/61391761?accountid=14775> Social Services Abstracts database
- Akoensi, T. D., Koehler, J. A., Lösel, F., & Humphreys, D. K. (2012). Domestic violence perpetrator programs in Europe, Part II: A systematic review of the state of evidence. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 57, 1206–1225.
- Arias, E., Arce, R., & Vilariño, M. (2013). Batterer intervention programmes: A meta-analytic review of effectiveness. *Psychosocial Intervention*, 22, 153–160.
- Austin, J. B., & Dankwort, J. (1999). The impact of a batterers' program on battered women. *Violence against Women*, 5, 25–42.
- Babcock, J. C., Green, C. E., & Robie, C. (2004). Does batterers' treatment work? A meta-analytic review of domestic violence treatment. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 23, 1023–1053.
- Barkley, R. A. (2014). *Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder: A handbook for diagnosis and treatment*. New York, NY: Guilford.
- Baxter, S., Killoran, A., Kelly, M., & Goyder, E. (2010). Synthesizing diverse evidence: The use of primary qualitative data analysis methods and logic models in public health reviews. *Public Health*, 124, 99–106.
- Begun, A. L., Murphy, C., Bolt, D., Weinstein, B., Strodthoff, T., Short, L., & Shelley, G. (2003). Characteristics of the safe at home instrument for assessing readiness to change intimate partner violence. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 13, 80–107.
- Bell, K. (2011). Towards a post-conventional philosophical base for social work. *British Journal of Social Work*, 42, 408–423.
- Brown, J. (2004). Shame and domestic violence: Treatment perspectives for perpetrators from self-psychology and affect theory. *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*, 19, 39–56.
- Brownlee, K., & Chlebovec, L. (2004). A group for men who abuse their partners: Participant perceptions of what was helpful. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 74, 209–213.
- Buchbinder, E., & Eisikovits, Z. (2008). Doing treatment: Batterers' experience of intervention. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 30, 616–630. doi:10.1016/j.childyouth.2008.01.009
- Campbell, N. C., Murray, E., Darbyshire, J., Emery, J., Farmer, A., Griffiths, F., . . . Kinmonth, A. L. (2007). Designing and evaluating complex interventions to improve health care. *British Medical Journal*, 334, 455–459.
- Cavanaugh, M. M., & Gelles, R. J. (2005). The utility of male domestic violence offender typologies new directions for research, policy, and practice. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 20, 155–166.

- Chovanec, M. G. (2012). Examining engagement of men in a domestic abuse program from three perspectives: An exploratory multi-method study. *Social Work with Groups: A Journal of Community and Clinical Practice*, 35, 362–378.
- Chovanec, M. G. (2014). The power of learning and men's stories in engaging abusive men in the change process: Qualitative study across programs. *Social Work with Groups: A Journal of Community and Clinical Practice*, 37, 331–347. doi:10.1080/01609513.2014.901207
- Coren, E., & Fisher, M. (2006). *The conduct of systematic research reviews for SCIE knowledge reviews*. London, England: SCIE.
- Coulthard, P., Yong, S. L., Adamson, L., Warburton, A., Worthington, H. V., Esposito, M., & Sharif, M. O. (2010). Domestic violence screening and intervention programmes for adults with dental or facial injury. *The Cochrane Database Systematic Reviews*, 8, 1–87, CD004486.
- Craig, M. E., Robyak, J., Torosian, E. J., & Hummer, J. (2006). A study of male veterans' beliefs toward domestic violence in a batterers intervention program. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 21, 1111–1128.
- DeAndrea, D. C., Tom Tong, S., Liang, Y. J., Levine, T. R., & Walther, J. B. (2012). When do people misrepresent themselves to others? The effects of social desirability, ground truth, and accountability on deceptive self-presentations. *Journal of Communication*, 62, 400–417. doi:10.1111/j.1460-2466.2012.01646.x
- Dishion, T. J., McCord, J., & Poulin, F. (1999). When interventions harm: Peer groups and problem behavior. *American Psychologist*, 54, 755.
- Dobash, R. E., Dobash, R. P., Cavanagh, K., & Lewis, R. (2000). *Changing violent men*. London, England: Sage.
- Domes, G., Schulze, L., & Herpertz, S. C. (2009). Emotion recognition in borderline personality disorder—a review of the literature. *Journal of Personality Disorders*, 23, 6–19.
- Dutton, D. G. (2008). My back pages. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 9, 131–143.
- Eckhardt, C. I., & Utschig, A. C. (2007). Assessing readiness to change among perpetrators of intimate partner violence: Analysis of two self-report measures. *Journal of Family Violence*, 22, 319–330.
- Evans, D. (2002). Systematic reviews of interpretive research: Interpretive data synthesis of processed data. *The Australian Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 20, 22.
- Feder, L., & Wilson, D. B. (2005). A meta-analytic review of court-mandated batterer intervention programs: Can courts affect abusers' behavior? *Journal of Experimental Criminology*, 1, 239–262.
- Feder, L., Wilson, D. B., & Austin, S. (2008). Court-mandated interventions for individuals convicted of domestic violence. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, 12, 1–46.
- Ferrer-Perez, V. A., & Bosch-Fiol, E. (2016). Batterer intervention programs in Spain an analysis of their effectiveness. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*. doi: 10.1177/0306624X16672455
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. New York, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Gondolf, E. W., & Hanneken, J. (1987). Gender warrior: Reformed batterers on abuse, treatment, and change. *Journal of Family Violence*, 2, 177–191.
- Gratz, K. L., Rosenthal, M. Z., Tull, M. T., Lejuez, C., & Gunderson, J. G. (2006). An experimental investigation of emotion dysregulation in borderline personality disorder. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 115, 850.
- Gray, R., Broady, T., Gaffney, I., Lewis, P., Mokany, T., & O'Neill, B. (2014). 'I'm working towards getting back together': Client accounts of motivation related to relationship status in men's behaviour change programmes in New South Wales, Australia. *Child Abuse Review*, 25, 171–182.
- Gray, R., Lewis, P., Mokany, T., & O'Neill, B. (2014). Peer discussion and client motivation in men's domestic violence programs: An Australian qualitative interview study. *Australian Social Work*, 67, 390–404.
- Grych, J., & Swan, S. (2012). Toward a more comprehensive understanding of interpersonal violence: Introduction to the special issue on interconnections among different types of violence. *Psychology of Violence*, 2, 105–110.
- Hamberger, L. K. (2008). Twenty-five years of change in working with partner abusers—Part II: Observations from the trenches about changes in understanding of abusers and abuser treatment. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 17, 1–22.
- Henning, K., & Holdford, R. (2006). Minimization, denial, and victim blaming by batterers: How much does the truth matter? *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 33, 110–130.
- Houghton, C., Murphy, K., Meehan, B., Thomas, J., Brooker, D., & Casey, D. (2017). From screening to synthesis: Using NVivo to enhance transparency in qualitative evidence synthesis. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 26, 873–881.
- Jewell, L. M., & Wormith, J. S. (2010). Variables associated with attrition from domestic violence treatment programs targeting male batterers: A meta-analysis. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 37, 1086–1113. doi:10.1177/0093854810376815
- Kearney, M. H. (2001). Enduring love: A grounded formal theory of women's experience of domestic violence. *Research in Nursing and Health*, 24, 270–282.
- Kelly, L., & Westmarland, N. (2015). *Domestic violence perpetrator programmes: Steps towards change. Project Mirabal Final Report*, London and Durham. Retrieved from <https://www.dur.ac.uk/criva/projectmirabal>
- Keltanen, J., Rasanen, E., & Holma, J. (2009). The development of reflexivity in batterers' treatment. *Psykologia*, 44, 276–288.
- Lilienfeld, S. O. (2007). Psychological treatments that cause harm. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 2, 53–70.
- Lindsay, J., Roy, V., Turcotte, D., & Montminy, L. (2006). Therapeutic factors in the first stage of men's domestic violence groups: Men talk about universality and how it becomes operational in the group. *Groupwork*, 16, 29–47.
- McGinn, T., Taylor, B., McColgan, M., & Lagdon, S. (2015). Survivor perspectives on IPV perpetrator interventions a systematic narrative review. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 17, 239–255. doi:10.1177/1524838015584358
- Montella, R. (2008). *Including the voice of domestic violence offenders in the treatment design for batterer intervention programs*

- (AAI3398647). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/835112928?accountid=14775> Sociological Abstracts database
- Murphy, C. M. (2013). Social information processing and the perpetration of intimate partner violence: It is (and isn't) what you think. *Psychology of Violence*, 3, 212–217.
- Murphy, C. M., & Baxter, V. A. (1997). Motivating batterers to change in the treatment context. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 12, 607–619.
- Newmark, L., Depies DeStefano, C., Harrell, A., Zweig, J., Brooks, L., & Schaffer, M. (2007). *Final report on the evaluation of the judicial oversight demonstration volume 3: Findings from focus groups with JOD victims and offenders* (pp. 99–99). Washington, DC, United States: Department of Justice.
- National Institute for Health and Social Care Excellence. (2009). "Antisocial personality disorder." NICE guidelines [CG77]. Retrieved 23 July, 2015, from <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg77>
- Owens, A. (2011). Confronting the challenges of domestic violence sentencing policy: A review of the increasingly global use of batterer intervention programs. *Fordham International Law Journal*, 35, 565.
- Pandya, V., & Gingerich, W. J. (2002). Group therapy intervention for male batterers: A microethnographic study. *Health and Social Work*, 27, 47–55.
- Parra-Cardona, J. R., Escobar-Chew, A. R., Holtrop, K., Carpenter, G., Guzmán, R., Hernández, D., . . . González Ramírez, D. (2013). "En el grupo tomas conciencia (in group you become aware)": Latino immigrants' satisfaction with a culturally informed intervention for men who batter. *Violence against Women*, 19, 107–132.
- Pence, E., & Paymar, M. (1983). *Education groups for men who batter: The Duluth Model*. New York, NY: Springer.
- Petrosino, A., Turpin-Petrosino, C., & Buehler, J. (2003). Scared Straight and other juvenile awareness programs for preventing juvenile delinquency: A systematic review of the randomized experimental evidence. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 589, 41–62.
- Pope, C., Mays, N., & Popay, J. (2007). *Synthesising qualitative and quantitative health evidence: A guide to methods*. London, England: McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
- Powell, J. (2002). The changing conditions of social work research. *British Journal of Social Work*, 32, 17–33.
- Radatz, D. L., & Wright, E. M. (2015). Integrating the principles of effective intervention into batterer intervention programming the case for moving toward more evidence-based programming. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*. doi:10.1177/1524838014566695
- Robertson, N. (1999). Stopping violence programmes: Enhancing the safety of battered women or producing better-educated batterers? *New Zealand Journal of Psychology*, 28, 68.
- Roguski, M., & Gregory, N. (2014). *Former family violence perpetrators: Narratives of change*. Auckland, New Zealand: The Glenn Inquiry.
- Rosenberg, M. S. (2003). Voices from the group: Domestic violence offenders' experience of intervention. *Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment & Trauma*, 7, 305–317.
- Saini, M., & Shlonsky, A. (2012). *Systematic synthesis of qualitative research*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Saunders, D. G. (2008). Group interventions for men who batter: A summary of program descriptions and research. *Violence and Victims*, 23, 156–172.
- Scott, K. L., & King, C. B. (2007). Resistance, reluctance, and readiness in perpetrators of abuse against women and children. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 8, 401–417.
- Scott, K. L., & Wolfe, D. A. (2000). Change among batterers: Examining men's success stories. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 15, 827–842.
- Scott, K. L., & Wolfe, D. A. (2003). Readiness to change as a predictor of outcome in batterer treatment. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 71, 879.
- Semiatin, J. N., Torres, S., LaMotte, A. D., Portnoy, G. A., & Murphy, C. M. (2017). Trauma exposure, PTSD symptoms, and presenting clinical problems among male perpetrators of intimate partner violence. *Psychology of Violence*, 7, 91–100.
- Shamai, M., & Buchbinder, E. (2010). Control of the self: Partner-violent men's experience of therapy. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 25, 1338–1362. doi:10.1177/0886260509340538
- Silvergleid, C. S., & Mankowski, E. S. (2006). How batterer intervention programs work: Participant and facilitator accounts of processes of change. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 21, 139–159.
- Silverman, D. (2010). *Qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Simmons, S. S. (2006). *African-American male batterers' perceptions of treatment program effectiveness* (AAI3249990). Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/61335822?accountid=14775> Social Services Abstracts database
- Smith, M. E. (2007). Self-deception among men who are mandated to attend a batterer intervention program. *Perspectives in Psychiatric Care*, 43, 193–203.
- Smith, M. E. (2011). A qualitative review of perception of change for male perpetrators of domestic abuse following abuser schema therapy (AST). *Counselling & Psychotherapy Research*, 11, 156–164.
- Stefanakakis, H. (2000). *Desistence from violence: Men's stories of identity transformation* (PhD). University of Guelph, Guelph, Canada.
- Stith, S. M., McCollum, E. E., Amanor-Boadu, Y., & Smith, D. (2012). Systemic perspectives on intimate partner violence treatment. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 38, 220–240. doi:10.1111/j.1752-0606.2011.00245.x
- Stith, S. M., Rosen, K. H., Middleton, K. A., Busch, A. L., Lundeberg, K., & Carlton, R. P. (2000). The intergenerational transmission of spouse abuse: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 62, 640–654.
- Stover, C. S., Meadows, A. L., & Kaufman, J. (2009). Interventions for intimate partner violence: Review and implications for evidence-based practice. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 40, 223.
- Sugarman, D. B., & Hotaling, G. T. (1997). Intimate violence and social desirability a meta-analytic review. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence* 12, 275–290.
- Sullivan, T. P. (2013). Think outside: Advancing risk and protective factor research beyond the intimate-partner-violence box. *Psychology of Violence*, 3, 121–125.

- Takano, Y. (2014). *Stories of change in men who were violent and abusive to their partners: A collaborative narrative inquiry* (PhD). University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada.
- Thomas, J., & Harden, A. (2008). Methods for the thematic synthesis of qualitative research in systematic reviews. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 8, 45.
- Virzi, J. B. (2012). *Examining outcomes following batterer's intervention: A follow-up study of the PATH program* (Doctoral Dissertation). Wright State University, Fairborn, OH.
- Walker, K., Bowen, E., Brown, S., & Sleath, E. (2015). An examination of psychopathology among men who have suspended the use of violence in their intimate relationships. *Journal of Family Violence*, 30, 1–16.
- Ward, T., Polaschek, D., & Beech, A. (2006). *Theories of sexual offending*. West Sussex, England: Wiley.
- Warters, W. C. (1992). "But she ran the green light . . .": *Abusive men colliding with feminism*. Paper presented at the Society for the Study of Social Problems. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/61731772?accountid=14775>
- Warters, W. C. (1993). *Challenged to change: Perspectives of abusive men involved in wife abuse prevention programs* (PhD). Syracuse University, Syracuse (9401714).
- Zlotnick, C. (1999). Antisocial personality disorder, affect dysregulation and childhood abuse among incarcerated women. *Journal of Personality Disorders*, 13, 90–95.

Author Biographies

Tony McGinn, PhD, is an intensive support worker in the psychological therapies service in the Western Health and Social Care Trust, Northern Ireland. Tony recently completed his PhD, investigating change processes in partner-violent men. Tony continues to research and publish in this field. **AQ1**

Brian Taylor, PhD, is a professor of social work at Ulster University in Northern Ireland where he leads the research cluster on decision, assessment, risk, and evidence studies. His social work practice experience includes child protection work and he is editor of the Sage book *Working with Aggression and Resistance in Social Work*.